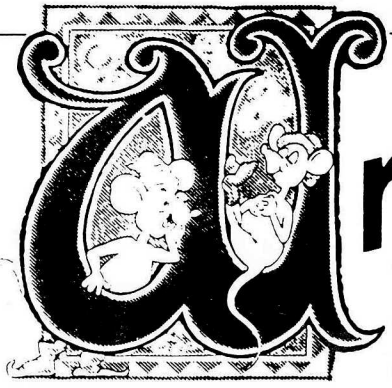
RM User

Volume 5:4
December 1990

The magazine of the RM User Group



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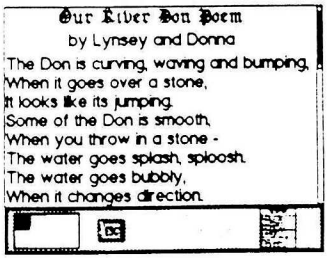
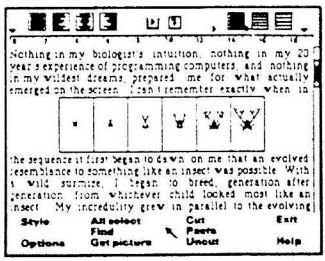
For the beginner . . .


Our River Don Poem
by Lynsey and Donna
The Don is curving, waving and bumping,
When it goes over a stone,
It looks like its jumping.
Some of the Don is smooth,
When you throw in a stone -
The water goes splash, splooosh.
The water goes bubbly,
When it changes direction.

For more advanced users . . .



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Nimbus or IBM £39 + VAT Nimbus network or IBM site licence £109 + VAT

(IBM requires colour EGA graphics)

SPA

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HELP-LINE

The User Group contains a great body of expertise amongst its members and the help-line exists to act as a channel for spreading knowledge and especially answers to your problems.

Remember, your problems are also our problems!

If you are in difficulty, please feel free to **ring anybody on the Committee** (see page 38 for numbers and note that Helen and John Williams have an answering machine. If you're not sure who to phone then leave a message there and they will redirect it). We may not, individually, know the answers, but we hope that we may know someone who does.

You may also telephone Tim Philips on 0284 706623, especially regarding 380Z or PC186 problems and Keith Whiddon on 0403 217339, particularly about Nimbus systems. Both numbers are home numbers. My thanks to Tim and Keith for volunteering.

Remember, the Group is on **TELECOM GOLD 83:JNL585**
Do feel free to write either to the Editor or the Secretary. This may be especially useful if the problem is complicated and non-urgent.

Advertising in the Magazine

Full- and half-page advertisements can be placed in the Magazine and details can be obtained from the Advertising Manager (address on Committee Page at back). We also take classified ads and members may place free ads for surplus kit in Micro-Mart, provided a valid membership number is quoted with the ad.

Rates

Back Cover: £75 Inside Cover: £60 Full Page: £50
Half-page: £30 Classified: £5 / 100 words

These rates assume black-on-white, camera-ready copy. Please avoid dot-matrix output. Typesetting is charged at cost and is additional to the above rates. Classified ads **must** be pre-paid, cheques for £5 payable to RM User Group.

The deadlines for the next two issues are: **February 4th 1991 and April 8th 1991**

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News and Editorial

Well, the conference is over for another year. Our thanks go out to Graham Townsend and Helen and John Williams for their part in making it happen and to all the lecturers, especially the large team from RM, who did their best to satisfy all questioners. There are reports elsewhere in the magazine giving some of the information which was gleaned over the four days.

On the Saturday there was an exhibition where a number of companies were exhibiting their wares. My apologies in advance if I miss any one out; these are the ones that I remember. Cumana were showing a number of interesting CD ROM setups, including a multiple CD setup. As I write this, details are still being finalised; phone Cumana (0483 503121) for details. RM have been installing some large CD systems recently, including one in a University library which, if I remember correctly, gave access to about 100 CDs from a sort of jukebox. When you think that 1 CD holds about 550Mbyte of data (5 times the size of my network server), one hundred of them is quite amazing. It should certainly make literature searches easier than they were in my day!

SPA were showing some new versions of existing software. PaintSPA has a number of significant changes; support for long picture names, the ability to use the full width of the screen, better text handling, much better printer support from within the program (no more need for Printshop) and the facility to load PC Paintbrush pictures. Pictures which don't occupy the whole screen are saved efficiently so you don't get a huge file for just a tiny picture. The very latest version also adds the facility to delete pictures (long overdue!), support for HP Inkjet and Paintjet printers and the facility to stretch or shrink parts of the picture. NewSPAper now has inbuilt import/ export facilities in the Reporter's Desk. The cuttings library is now managed differently (making it easier to add or remove pictures but perhaps slower to access), pages are not restricted to 16x4 zones and printing seems faster. A really useful change is that both Desk and Studio start by showing the page layout and strongly suggesting that you fetch a story or picture; this gets round all sorts of problems that children could get into. Write On! now also allows text import and export and can handle the small PaintSPA pictures. Upgrades are very reasonably priced ; details on 0926 422959.

Peter Whittle was showing the latest version of Corel Draw amongst other things. If you're looking for a Windows based drawing package then this is well worth a look. MicroGrafx were also showing Charisma and this is a very impressive program. It's perhaps unfair to call them *drawing* programs; they can be used by real artists to produce some quite amazing work. I only wish I could draw at all!

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Edhitec had a number of new packages on show; I picked up a demo disc for Cartooners. This is a program which allows you to make your own cartoon style films. It will run on a PC186 with SETPC but looks much better on a PC286. It really is easy to produce your own films and it's just great fun! The full version costs just £24.50. It comes complete with 40 characters and 10 scenes or you can create your own with DeLuxe Paint. Networking details are still being sorted out; further details and demo discs from Edhitec on 0423 871027.

Essex Educational Software were showing their menu system. This is intended as a replacement for RM's blue menus. The limitation on the number of programs in a menu is removed and the menu system itself can move out of memory when a program is loaded (needing just 12k when memory resident). There are shortcut routes for experienced users but beginners can follow the normal routes, using either mouse or keyboard. It is also possible to password protect certain menu items. It looks quite useful; I'm loath to change menus when people have got reasonably used to one system but I suspect that children would cope far better than adults with the changeover. The price of the system varies depending on the type of institution but for schools is £50 for a site licence. Contact Mrs C Sharp at the Educational Resources Centre, Beeches Close, Beeches Road, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 2SB for further information.

Pandora is a new Question and Answer System. The program allows enormous flexibility in setting and marking tests. It comes complete with 1500 questions, an editor to allow you to create your own and the facility to import files of questions from dBASE III or a word processor. Quiz sessions can handle up to 30 players and will not repeat questions within a session. Scores are kept and can be tabulated or graphed. It costs £49 and further information is available from Question Mark Computing on 071-794 9411.

By now you've probably received the December issue of Nimbus News from RM. It contains lots of interesting items; for those of you not on the mailing list yet, these are the best parts. First of all there are some price cuts. For example, PC186 and all M Series systems now come complete with a mouse at no extra cost; effectively £39 less. There are also some price cuts on computers and memory. RM are also running a special offer on Superbase 4. Until March 31, 1991 a 16 user licence is available for just £95 (order code 026-895; ask for Superbase 4 RM Net 16-User special offer) This compares to the normal price of £995 and at last makes a Windows database system available at a very reasonable price. Perhaps someone at RM read my plea for a Windows DBMS! I mentioned Windows 3 for PC186 network in the last issue. It will be available "early in 1991" at a price of £29; order code 026-766.

Just after the last issue went to press I went to the launch of Borland's Quattro Pro version 2. Philippe Kahn introduced the session and everything was very impressive. I've been using Quattro for some time now and like it a lot. It seems to do everything that (say) Lotus 1-2-3 does but for a fraction of the price and (if the demonstrations were fair) at much greater speed. I don't think that it is as easy to use as Excel but sometimes speed makes up for lack of intuitive qualities. On my network in school there is a very long delay after clicking on the menu bar before the menu drops down and an even longer delay before anything responds. Printing graphics is painful (with 12 people working delays of 20 minutes seem not uncommon!) and I find the program unusable. We've also bought Excel for use as part of the Local Management Scheme and running on standalone machines this is perfectly fast enough. I can't afford to buy winchesters for all my computers so I don't know what the answer is. I'm hoping that when Windows 3 is released for the network that it will be faster, although I suspect I'll have to add extra memory to the PC286 machines to get the full advantage. Incidentally, Windows is one area where the PC186 is definitely better than the PC286. The extra addressable memory in a 1MB machine means that most Windows applications run dramatically faster (and if you have 1.5Mb then using a silicon disc as the TEMP drive is even better).

I'm always certain that when I put a request for information in the magazine I'll get a reply from someone; in the last issue I asked for some advice on how to use Excel to count some of the membership field information. Ian Dodgson sent me a sample sheet to show how it's done and I have printed the important parts elsewhere.

One of the major events of the educational year is BETT which takes place at the Barbican in London from 16-19 January, 1991. This is always well worth a visit, and, because it is open on a Saturday, it is possible to go even if you can't get time out of school (always supposing you don't mind giving up a weekend!) RM will be there in force together with a huge range of other exhibitors. Tickets are free to education visitors and if you've not had dozens through the post then they are available by phoning 071-704 4844.

Apologies and corrections

In the last issue, the article on a menu system for the Chain 64 Network said that Access is available from Software Production Associates; unfortunately it is not.

In the same article the gremlins were really at work, with the results that pages 21-23 got re-arranged; everything that was supposed to be there was there it just needed a bit of random access!

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Letters to the Editor

We have bought a second hand Penman Plotter which we are assured is OK. We got it in order to be able to plot output from RM Logo.

However the communication is very temperamental. I can get it to reset and do an odd bit of drawing (perhaps two commands) using direct instructions, but then it beeps frequently as though there is an error, for example too much data coming. (The manual says it will beep if Xon/Xoff doesn't respond fast enough)

I have tried it with a standard Epson printer lead, connected to AUX with what I think are appropriate baud rates, with and without DX in Config. I have followed the instructions in the Logo manual, but still with no success.

I have phoned RM Technical Support, and they cannot help.

Someone somewhere must have got one to work on a PC186 sometime if only to test the contents of the manual. Do you have any ideas for a contact who can help, or any other ideas that might help the experimenting, eg. extra connections that might be needed in the 25pinD to help the handshaking?

Thanks in anticipation.
Peter Chilvers.

There is a very good voice synthesiser for the BBC B computer called "Speech". Does anyone know of one for the Nimbus?

Yours Truly
Edward Gulbekian

CHKDSK - SYTOS the extra file
Before backing up our network hard disc (C:) on to tape using a SYTOS tape streamer and software CHKDSK is first run. CHKDSK C: /F flushes out any errors in the directories caused for example by pupils incorrectly switching of the stations and it also gives a status report on the 'health' of the disk, ie bad sectors, the number of files on the disk. Typically for us, 9 hidden files and 3421 user files, making a total of 3430 files. SYTOS will report one less file copied than CHKDSK reports exists, ie in the above case 3429 files copied. It appears that the extra file reported by CHKDSK is the volume label of the hard disk, which is not in fact a file.
Acknowledgment: Simon Nudd RM Tech Support.

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HELP PLEASE BATCH FILES

How does one generate a 'bleep' from within a batch file ?

```
commands
echo 'bleep'
pause
more commands
```

Specifically I want to use this when running a VX server in MSDOS standalone mode

Thanks

PETER BUTT

If you load a bacth file (like, say, P:\STEED.BAT) into Steed then you will see that the error handler lines start with ECHO ^G. This is the symbol used to represent Control G. Unfortunately you cannot enter control codes using most word processors but Steed can cope. Get to the the point where you want the beep, type ECHO and then press SHIFT CTRL 6; nothing happens yet. Press CTRL G and you will see the ^G appear.

If you look at other batch files you will often see long strings of codes following the ESC character (shown as $ in Steed). These can be used to do things like changing colours, underlining etc. Would anyone like to write me an article about this?

I am about to start a Nimbus Users Group for the Cheshire and North Wales area for teachers, owners and network managers to swap ideas, problems and review software. Although Cheshire has been an Acorn authority for years, at least 25 oits 72 secondary schools now have Nimbi, some with networks and two primaries have Nimbus networks.

We would welcome being contacted by other Nimbus users to share experiences. We expect to meet in a Chester school or at the Cheshire Micro Unit, N. Cheshire College, Warrington.

Geoff Nelder
Queens Park High School
Queens Park Road
Chester
CH4 7AE

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1990 Conference Report

Helen Williams

The 13th RM User Group Annual Conference took place at the Penguin Hotel, Daventry between October 19th and 22nd. About fifty members of the User Group spent the weekend being trained in the use of a new package, learning about Records of Achievement and IT or Technology: Design and IT, immersed in the intricacies of setting up or improving their networks and picking the brains of the RM technical support team that spent the weekend with us. Windows applications were the most popular this year and courses included Pagemaker, Excel and Word for Windows.

Courses started on Friday afternoon and ran until Monday lunch. Many delegates were so keen that they were still working past midnight and there were several computers secreted in bedrooms for those who could not manage a few hours without the use of screen and keyboard. There were also several 'foreign' laptop computers being used in various corners - perhaps next year there will be a few RM laptops!

On Saturday there was a series of Seminars conducted by the RM Team and an opportunity to put questions to an RM panel of experts. The Seminars included "How to speed up your network' (very much need by Windows Applications users!), 'Menus and batchfiles' and were well worth attending. In the afternoon there was an opportunity to look at and try a range of hardware and software from commercial companies together with the 'Netsoft' server packed with software.

Saturday Evening brought the 'RM Extravaganza' with Russell Prue and Tim Nash. The combination of borrowed voice synthesizer, newly acquired animation disk and the latest version of the RM Midi system kept us all entertained and informed.

The Conference finshed with a final question and answer session with the RM panel of experts. Can I finish by thanking all those who attended the Conference. Your feedback forms have been most useful and we are now starting to plan for the 14th Annual Conference. Any ideas, requests please forward to me and I will attempt to incorporate them and still keep the price below the cost of one megabyte of RAM!!

At the Conference I collected names and addresses from people who wanted to form an informal help network. If I missed you, or you were not at the conference but want to be involved, then please let me know as soon as possible.

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THE WORLD OF LINGENUITY

More technology for less money

SCSI NEWS

HARD DRIVE - IMPROVED PERFORMANCE AND PRICE REDUCTIONS

A3000		ARCHIMEDES	
SCSI INTERFACE CARD	£149.00 PLUS VAT	NEW PRICE — SCSI INTERFACE CARD	£169.00 PLUS VAT
NEW PRICE — 20MB HARD DRIVE	£399.00 PLUS VAT	NEW PRICE — 20MB HARD DRIVE	£349.00 PLUS VAT
40MB HARD DRIVE	£589.00 PLUS VAT	NEW PRICE — 40MB HARD DRIVE	£485.00 PLUS VAT

PERFORMANCE Breakthrough

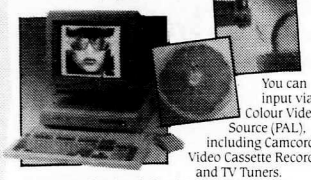
THE BEST PERFORMANCE 40 MB HARD DRIVE AVAILABLE FOR THE ARCHIMEDES AND A3000

SCSI DEVICES WITH A CAPACITY OF UP TO 1000 MB ARE AVAILABLE

SNAPSHOT

COLOUR IMAGES "GRABBED" IN REALTIME

Snapshot allows the Archimedes user to digitise pictures in colour and realtime, using standard Video equipment.



You can input via a Colour Video Source (PAL), including Camcorders, Video Cassette Recorders, and TV Tuners.

Snapshot is a full 12 bit digitiser with an enhanced real-time display. Sprites can be saved at a rate of up to 84 per minute, or raw image data can be processed with !Enhance (supplied with package).

SNAPSHOT £339.00 PLUS VAT — NEW PRODUCT

Colour Converter still available for those with Watford Digitisers. Ring for details

Contact your local dealer for further details about all Lingenuity Products.
In case of difficulty ring **(098 685) 477**

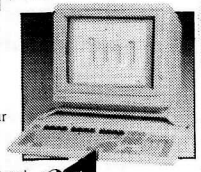
HOTLINK PRESENTER

TALKS TO PIPEDREAM 3

For the first time, two Acorn applications can communicate with each other in real-time in the RISC OS environment.

HotLink Presenter includes all the features of Presenter II (the professional graphics programme which enables you to present your data graphics in bar, pie or line format) with the additional benefit that it can be updated automatically from Pipedream 3.

Updates are available for existing Presenter II and Presenter users, as well as site-licences for multi-station installations.



NEW PRODUCT

HOTLINK PRESENTER £49.95 PLUS VAT

PRESENTER STORY

You've heard about Presenter Story - well now its available!

Presenter Story is a revolutionary software package that enables you to create your own presentation on a work-station and project it into any of the following:

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- **Video Walls**
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Use your Archimedes or A3000 for that important presentation. You can change your presentation at a stroke in a few seconds - no more last minute panics getting new slides or acetates made. Presenter story is ideal for sales presentations, corporate presentations, training programmes, internal departmental presentations, or home or studio video application.

NOW AVAILABLE

PRESENTER STORY £169.00 PLUS VAT

LINGENUITY PROFESSIONAL

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The Network Bundle - Using QUEST and PTABLE.QST

Peter Butt, City of London Schoo

(NB it should be noted that the BOIL and MELT data for arsenic was incorrect as supplied in the bundled PTABLE.QST some 5 years ago.) The following is an IT worksheet that we give as a DBMS exercise and it backs up work that our pupils do in their General Science course.

PTABLE Details of the naturally occuring elements.

Using the information given on the 'values' screen.

1. How many elements are listed in the file ?

2. How many different details are given about each element?

   Use query and print to find the answers to the following.

3. Who discovered the following elements and when were they discovered ?
   Hint: query element ident "silicon"
   print element discover date symbol

		Scientist	Date	Symbol
a)	silicon			
b)	astatine			
c)	neon			
d)	brass			
e)	zirconium			

4. Were any other elements discovered in the same year as zirconium ? If so complete:
   Query:
   Element Discoverer
   Element Discoverer

5. Which elements did Bunsen discover and who was his colleague?
   Query
   Elements a) b) c)
   Colleague

6. Which elements were known before the birth of Christ?
   Hint: find those elements whose date is equal to 0
   Query:

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7. Which of these earliest known elements has the greatest density ?
   Hint: format 1, print density element
   Element Density

8. As you know, Osmium is the densest element, which element is the second densest?
   Element Density

9. Which is the least dense element?
   Element Density

10. Which element has the:
    (a) Lowest melting point
    (b) Highest boiling point
    Element Temperature
    (a)
    (b)

11. What is the state of the following at room temperature?
    (Room temperature is about 20 degrees Celsius.)
    (a) Silicon (b) Arsenic
    (c) Xenon (d) Tellurium

12. Which elements are liquid at room temperature ?
    Query:
    Answers:

13. Are any elements never liquid at any temperature ?
    YES/NO Which elements

14. What is the most recently discovered element ?
    Query
    Element Date

15. Draw a histogram to compare the number of elements that were discovered in the following time intervals:
    Number of elements
    1AD to 1700AD
    1701 to 1800AD
    1801 to 1900AD
    1901 to present
    Total

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Pagemaker 3. - Using the Style Palette and Tags

John Williams

The problem with changing to a new version of an old friend (or adversary) is the danger of not exploring all of the new features. It happens because you adapt your working practice to the limitations of your tools. Such is the case with Pagemaker 3. I knew it had a Style Palette and used tags, but I was quite happy working the way I had developed with version 1.

The Style Palette and the associated tags were introduced in version three to counteract reluctance on the part of corporate users to get involved in DTP. They were worried that putting DTP in the hands of their staff would destroy the investment in 'house style' and the corporate image.

The Style Palette
Instead of selecting a section of text, clicking once on Type to set the font, then again to justify it, then again to adjust indents etc., you select the text and click on a style name on the palette, and all of these are set to correspond to the chosen style.

You can create, and modify styles in the Type menu. If you modify a style that you have used all items formatted in that style change to the new specification.

Tags
The Style Palette works by putting an invisible 'Tag' at the beginning of each section of text. If you were to use the export facility to send this article from Pagemaker to a text file and then look at it with Word or Windows Notepad you would see something like this.

<Headings>Pagemaker 3 - Using the Style Palette and Tags
<Author>John Williams
<Body Text>The problem with changing to a.....

The tags (enclosed in <> brackets) match the names used in the style palette. We can reverse the process and put the tags in whilst typing the text in a word-processor. This can be used both to increase productivity and to help ensure consistent style throughout a publication.

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First decide on style names:-

This Is A Title

This is an author

This is the body text, and is the major part of what we are going to type.

then type the text:-

<Headings>Pagemaker 3 - Using the Style Palette and Tags
<Author>John Williams
<Body Text>The problem with changing to a.....etc.

Now open your publication.

Do all the usual things like page-setup, then go to the Type menu and click on Define Styles. Click on 'New' to create new styles by choosing each feature, Font, Para, Tabs (Color?), and save it as a new name. Beware of the option to make a style 'based on' an existing style as changes to the original can affect the new style.

When you have a style saved for each name you have used in your text, you can 'Place' the text. Don't double click, select the name, then click on 'Read Tags', and finally OK. When the text appears on the page, it should be ready formatted in the styles you have defined.

I suggested you did it this way round to demonstrate that it's not necessary to define the style before you start, only to decide on the style names. The implications of this I leave you to ponder. A whole magazine in consistent style, fully spell checked, with only half an hour or so spent in Pagemaker!

PS. If Steve is already using the Style Palette I hope my example style names don't match his otherwise this will all look wrong when he places it.

I do use styles and find them to be an easy way of making sure that different articles are laid out in a similar way. As John says, you can choose the names for each style before you have defined them but this also means that you can change your mind later. For example, the majority of this magazine is set in the style called *Body Text* and it is now 10point Palatino. If I decided that I would like a change then all I do is choose Define Styles and alter the definition for Body Text. Immediately (well, almost!) the whole magazine would change to match. Style tags will work with any word processor, but if you use Microsoft Word then there is another way of importing style information; see the article on page 20 about using Style Sheets in Word.

The Cumana Removable Disc Cartridge Drive

There are various reasons for using the 10Mb and 20MB removable cartridge drives. This article tries to show what some members are doing with them.

Using PageMaker on a network station

Howard Toon

We have recently had a massive growth of interest in desk-top publishing, and, in the last month alone, have produced work ranging from one page theatre programmes to a couple of forty page booklets and a two hundred page MA thesis. On average, PageMaker is probably being used on one of the network stations for at least two hours each day but, because it takes such a long time to load and, when running, causes serious delays to other users on the network, we had to restrict its use to times when the network is quiet. Typically this has meant early morning or evening sessions only and this, of course, is quite an inconvenience for those wanting to use the package. In use, the PageMaker software is frustatingly slow because of the heavy disc access needed and all the usual advantages of instinctive operation are lost because of the network delays.

The first trial, therefore, involved loading Windows and all the PageMaker software onto a single cartridge in a drive attached to one of the network stations and loading the programs from there rather than from the network. The improvement was *astonishing*. With this arrangement it took about 50 seconds to load Windows and get PageMaker ready for work as against about three minutes when loading from the network. Since all the temporary files were directed to the cartridge, other network users were unaffected except when publication files were being saved to the winchester. The PageMaker package ran so much faster and more smoothly off the cartridge that accurate timings on the network were not even attempted. Obviously, overall performance was a little slower than a stand-alone with winchester but the improvement was well worth the effort of installation on the network station.

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As an extra bonus, some of the spare capacity on the PageMaker cartridge was used to hold part of our clip art library. We have about 15 discs of Micrografx clip art altogether, but the sheer volume of it all had made it impracticable to hold any great number of artwork files permanently on the network. When required, individual files were copied from floppy disc onto the public area of the network and used from there. The new disc cartridge drive meant that, as an alternative, over 200 of the picture files and the software used to extract individual pictures could be placed in a separate directory on the cartridge and so be available at all times.
This led to a further improvement in overall performance and made the whole process of creating and manipulating publications more convenient and effective.

Storage of Users' Files

Richard Naylor

The cartridge drive we are using is connected to a SCSI interface card which fits into our AX network server. Installation was straightforward although if you have a number of interface cards then some investigation of the hardware setup is required to avoid conflict between devices. The RM manuals and Tech Support are helpful in this respect. Our cartridge drive arrived at a time when we were beginning to experience problems in accommodating all our users' files on a 60Mb file server. Our network has to cope with a wide variety of types of usage. Formal class usage competes for storage space with that of staff and a computer club of over one hundred members. Further, there is an increasing amount of informal use by pupils of all ages wishing to carry out small projects. With the advent of the cartridge drive we have set up cartridges for groups of classes and other informal users. Staff still store files on the hard disc. The cartridge is changed by the teacher for the timetabled classes while the computer club cartridge remains in the drive at all other times for club and informal pupil use. Early experience shows that this is working well. The longer access time of the cartridge drive compared to the hard disc is, for the most part, not noticeable. Indeed, the computer club hacks, who do not yet know that there files are now on the cartridge drive would be the first to complain about any degradation in performance, have yet to make any comments.

Connected to a network server the cartridge drive has another important application. It makes an ideal device for backing up the hard disc. Supplied with the device is the *Back-It* software which is an easy to use utility normally run when the server is operating in standalone mode. Alternatively, selective backups of files from the server are possible in network mode using RMTREE and COPY.

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Another use we are investigating is the storage of large databases for the careers department. They have to cope with packages such as Microdoors (over 5 Mb of data!) and a large amount of administration relating to UCCA, PCAS and work experience. A cartridge drive with its removable disc should increase the flexibility of the system by effectively providing multiple hard disc capacity and good performance.

Large Dataease databases

Keith Humphries

Westwood St Thomas' school is a 13-18 comprehensive school of around 900 pupils on the western side of Salisbury. Information Technology is considered to be a vital part of the curriculum of the school and over the past few years there has been heavy investment in computers and associated peripherals.

Every pupil and member of staff has their own individual user area on the network which they can use to store the work they produce during lessons or indeed at lunchtimes or after school. The various computer rooms can be booked for class use but at other times they operate an open access policy - pupils using computers as the need arises during their lessons.

The management of so many user areas and computers could pose numerous problems. Fortunately the removable cartridge drive produced by Cumana has enabled many potential difficulties to be avoided. The network has a 20Mb removable cartridge drive installed on the server (a 60Mb AX).

The school is currently structuring two large databases which will be held on the cartridge drive. The first is designed to help with the problems of adminstering work experience for pupils in the fourth and sixth years. With the help of the careers service a record of all potential employers and the work experience they can offer is being built up. This will be transferred to Dataease this enabling rapid searching for suitable employers when placements for pupils are being sought. A second advantage is that standard printouts can be provided for parents, pupils and employers when required. The size of this database will make it impossible to hold on the file server alongside all of the normal software and so it will reside on its own 20Mb cartridge.

The second database is being designed around the school resource centre and it is hoped that all items such as books, videos, slide artefacts and tapes will eventually be catalogued. When this work is finished a second cartridge drive will be added to the server to enable the catalogue to be permanently available at any work station on the network.

There are many other uses for this versatile device including storing records of achievement, stock control in science departments, large datafiles for information retrieval, viewdata, storage of weather satellite transmissions and applications where security is important such as administration or accounting. Of all the useful peripheral devices produced for computers the removable drive from Cumana must rate at the top of the list.

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Style Sheets in Microsoft Word

Stephen Rochford

Most users of Word quickly find out that pressing ALT B turns on bold, ALT I gives italics and so on. Many go on to find out that there are other ALT key combinations that give short cuts to other choices in the Format Character or Format Paragraph menus and wish that there was a way of customizing these. For example, if you want to type a series of numbered paragraphs then you can follow the following steps:

1. Press ALT T
2. Type the number and press the tab key.
3. Type the text for the paragraph. As you get to the end of the first line the text will automatically wrap round and line up under the first letter of the paragraph.

This is fine until you want a number greater than 9 or you want to put numbers and letters at the start of a paragraphs (1 (a), 1 (b) etc.). This then has to be set up by setting more than one tab and special indents for the first line of the paragraph and the left indent. Doing this many times is tedious, especially if you are a typist used to just tapping the space bar to line things up nicely. (Amongst other things, I teach word processing to adults. Many of these are typists who find the business of setting tabs really confusing and unnecessarily time consuming).

This is where style sheets come to the rescue. The Gallery menu option takes you to a completely blank screen the first time you use it. Let's suppose that you want to have headings which are 16 point Roman, bold and centred. Press I to insert a new code and you are taken to a new menu. Type HE in the key code field, select paragraph from the usage field, leave the variant field alone (Word will put a number in it for you) and type Heading in the Remark field. A lot of information will appear at the top of the screen. Choose Format Character from the menu and select bold and the appropriate font. Finally choose Format Paragraph and highlight centred. Exit from the gallery, back to your document screen.

You are now ready to type a heading. At the end of the line (before you press enter) press ALT HE (i.e. press and hold down the ALT key then press and release H, press and release E then release ALT). The heading should move to the middle and become bold (it will also change font but this does not show on the screen).

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That's all there is to it. One set of keys to carry out 4 formatting changes. There are some slight problems; you'll find that all the keys such as ALT B no longer work but don't worry they've all just gained an X (so bold is now ALT XB, underline is ALT XU etc.). You need to remember to save the style sheet before you quit Word (it'll remind you if you don't and give it the name NORMAL.STY) and the style sheet must be there when you next load the document. This will only cause a problem if you copy the document onto another disc and don't copy the style sheet. You'll still be able to load and edit your work but your style codes won't be there. If you subsequently copy the style sheet onto the same disc then just use Format Style Sheet to "attach" the sheet (Word 5 uses the command Format Stylesheet Attach to give the same effect).

I make extensive use of style sheets to ensure a standard layout. For example, I frequently type out questions which have numbered subsections. Once I've worked out where all the tabs and paragraph indents go, I define a style to hold them. Pressing ALT NL sets up the necessary layout for numbered and lettered sections and ALT NN sets up a paragraph for numbered questions with roman numerals for subsections.

In John Williams' article he explains why style sheets were first introduced; an example of this is found in my school. Our head likes all his letters typed with an indent at the start of each paragraph and printing in Palatino. His name goes at the centre of the page. For each of these there is a style sheet setting so the four typists just have to remember to select the appropriate style and then just type; no problems with forgetting to type to a particular layout.

Finally, I use a special style sheet when I am typing text for the magazine. John mentioned the use of style tags and these can be used by any word processor to create text which PageMaker will recognise. Word, however, has a bonus. If you use a name in the remark field which matches the name of PageMaker style then PageMaker will pick this up. For example, the heading here is typed in a style coded HE but with the word Headings in the remark field. When I place this Word document the first line will automatically be formatted properly. The writer's name is similarly picked out with a style coded AU and with Author in the remark field so that the Author style in PageMaker will be automatically applied.

I hope that this is helpful to those people who have either wondered what the gallery is about or, alternatively, have felt that there has to be an easier way to handle the formatting in Word. Write and let me know how you get on.

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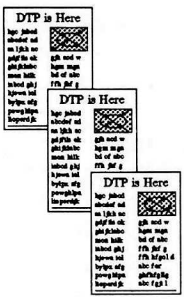

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Network Drives S and T

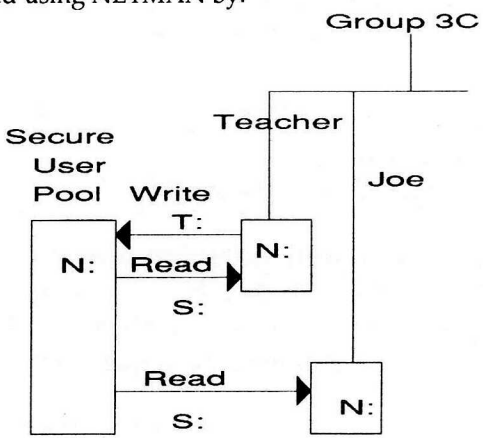
Peter Butt - City of London School

Public access to data files

This is necessary to allow class members to load (say) teachers worksheets and data files. However, I find it a hassle, to have first as NETMGR to save those data files in the relevant PUBLIC directory and then have to ATTRIB them to read-only and subsequently, at a later date to delete them having first to un-ATTRIB them.

RM Tech Support made an inspired suggestion for an 'Exercise Pool' in their Tech Support Bulletin issue 14 June 1989, 'An alternative to PUT and GET'. It was suggested that a public read only permission to a secure users directory could be created and so, all that a teacher need do is to log on as the secure user and copy their data file to the secure users N:. Any pupil could then load from, but not write to, this directory. As the permission is read only, there is no need to attrib any files to read only

This is achieved using NETMAN by:



a. create the secure user POOL in the standard way:

F2 Edit Users

POOL

<enter> for secure user.

F10 Users Main Details

Give POOL a password.

F2 Keep details

F10 Quit keeping details

Re-boot server so that \SECURE\POOL exists.

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b. to give public access, with NETMAN

F6 Edit Public Options

F6 Public Connections

This leads to the Data Entry menu for Public Paths P,Q,R,S.
For (say) S drive add the entry:

[S] [*C:\SECURE\POOL*] [*R*]

the R giving read-only access to public users.

F2 Keep details

After re-booting, the above allows any user to load files from S: drive.

LOGO: setdrive 's, setfile 'procs, load
QUEST: infile s:data
LOGISTIX: /L s:sheet
WORD: Transfer Load s:doc

"Help, I've messed up my data file."

Scenario: Computer Room with a network of PC186 machines and a VX server, running under NET 3.0. (Should also work with a PC-186 server and NET 2.) Class 3C is having a hands on lesson so all the stations are in use. The pupils are using the same application program and they initially started work on the same data file. During the lesson, each pupil and the teacher modify and so create their own version of that data file. Then, for some reason Joe messes up his data file. How can the teacher salvage the situation?

One answer is for the teacher to give Joe a copy of their own version of the data file, but given the situation, this has to be done quickly and with the minimum of hassle.

A possible solution is to give the teacher (only!) write permission access to \SECURE\POOL so they can save/copy their data file to that drive, and then Joe can load the teacher's updated file from it.

To give the teacher write permission to C:\SECURE\POOL:
Using NETMAN

F2 Edit Users

teacher's ID

F6 Users Connections

This leads to the Data Entry menu for Drive Paths T,U,V,W.
For (say) T drive add the entry:
[T] [*C:\SECURE\POOL*] [*ACDRW*]

One would appear to have to give the teacher all 5 permissions as different applications software save data files in different ways. (Note that on Net 2 there are only three permissions; RWC)

LOGISTIX is the simplest to transfer files.

Teacher:	/Save T:DATA and continue working.
Pupil:	/Zap their messed up file.
	/Load S:DATA

During saving QUEST and WORD create temporary files which are then renamed and/or deleted before the data file is finally saved.

Using QUEST experience has taught me to always RESET after saving any files.

Teacher:	ARCHIVE T:DATA
	RESET
	INFILE S:DATA
Pupil:	RESET to clear messed up file, (from experience, it may be safer to FINISH and reload QUEST)
	INFILE S:DATA

With WORD files, when the teacher has saved their data file to T: they have to TRANSFER CLEAR their workspace before another user can access their saved file from S:. The teacher, then TRANSFER LOADs their own file back again.

Teacher:	TRANSFER SAVE T:DATA
	TRANSFER CLEAR
	TRANSFER LOAD S:DATA and restarts working.
Pupil:	TRANSFER CLEAR messed up file
	TRANSFER LOAD S:DATA

Section 1 definitely works. Section 2 seems to work, but only time and experience will tell !

Acknowledgements:
Simon Nudd, RM Tech Support
Peter Andrews, AU Hatfield

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SD08	As You Like It
SD09	A Comedy of Errors
SD10	The Merchant of Venice
SD11	A Midsummer's Night Dream
SD12	Much Ado About Nothing
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Repairing a Floppy Disc

Jake Loddington, Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, Blackburn

Are my colleagues more disaster-prone than most? A member of our English Department recently brought me a Word disc, containing 30 text files, which wouldn't boot on the Staff-Room Nimbus. I need hardly tell you that the files were irreplaceable and of course he had no back-up copy.

I tried running it on a different machine, with no success. But I noticed that whichever machine it went into, it gave a strange ticking noise whilst rotating. I next tried PC Tools, which wouldn't look at it, and File Rescue Plus, which was more optimistic. The recovery program ran for about 20 minutes, but finally produced just one file - of zero length.

At this point I must have lost my presence of mind, because I shook the disc quite vigorously. (Partly in exasperation, and partly because I wondered if the ticking noise was caused by some internal obstruction.) It worked! Putting the disc back into the machine, it ran correctly, and although the ticking noise developed again later, at least I had time to copy the valuable files before the disc once more became unusable.

So what is the moral of this tale? Treat 'em rough? Never give up? I'm not sure .... but I know one member of staff who will keep back-ups in future.

I'm reminded of a story, which is probably apocryphal, and dates back to the days of $5^1/_4$" floppy discs. A teacher had been working late in school using a 380z. He knew that he needed to make a backup copy of the disc he had been using but did not know how. He went along to the office use by the head of computer studies to leave the disc to be copied the next day. Finding the desk in a mess he decided to write a message and then leave it and the disc where they would easily be seen. The best idea was to staple them both to the noticeboard. Unfortunately history does not record how the data was copied from this perforated disc!

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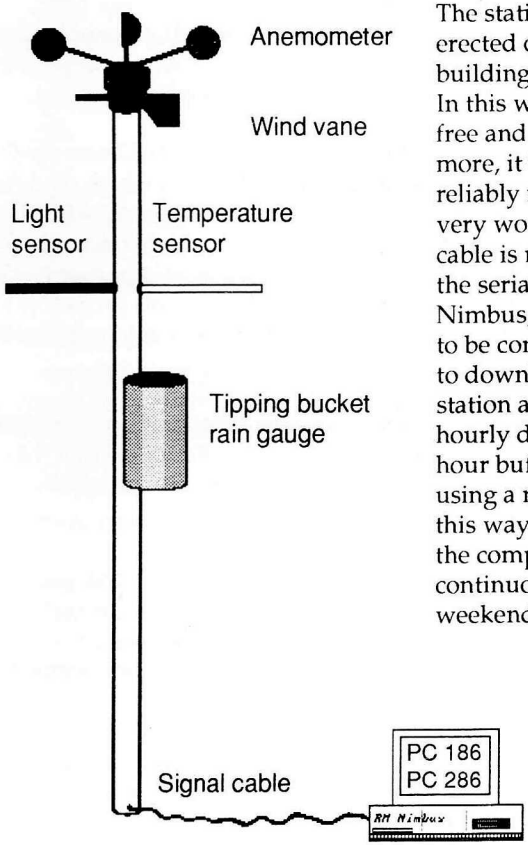
The Weather Reporter

Keith Whiddon

About a year ago I was approached by a local electronics firm, Aardware Design, to evaluate their prototype data-logging weather station. This consists of a metal tube containing a custom-built circuit board controlled by an 8035 microcontroller. A full-size anemometer is mounted on the top, along with a wind vane, temperature sensor, infra-red light sensor and rainfall collector (with mechanical tipping bucket read by an optical sensor). It therefore measures wind speed (including gusts), wind direction, temperature (including max and min values), hours of sunshine, hours of daylight and rainfall. Aardware are currently producing other sensors too.



The station is designed to be erected on the roof or wall of a building, just like a TV aerial. In this way, it is maintenance free and vandal-proof. What is more, it is extremely robust, reliably monitoring even the very worst of storms. A signal cable is run from the station to the serial (or AUX) port of your Nimbus, but this does not need to be connected until you wish to download information. The station automatically logs hourly data using a rolling 60 hour buffer and logs daily data using a rolling 58 day buffer. In this way it is independent of the computer and will collect continuous data over weekends and holidays.

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The menu driven software has been written by the Advisory Unit at Hatfield for PC 186 and PC 286 machines and can be run from floppy or installed onto a Winchester or network. It really couldn't be easier to use. All data is displayed in the form of simple graphs, all of which may be dumped a printer (even in colour on an Integrex). It is possible to display the current weather, as it is actually being monitored, or to download recent weather. Data can be archived to disk and displayed on a future occasion. Utilities are included to convert the data into Quest/Oriel, Key, Grass or comma separated forms.

Activities to do with weather are a recurring theme in the National Curriculum and the Weather Reporter is a excellent tool by which to combine the skills of handling information and measurement and control. It is of the highest quality construction and design and excellent value. For £295 you get the fully assembled station, 10 metres of signal cable, interface cable, software, technical manual and teacher's guide, including examples for Geography, Maths, Science and Technology in the National Curriculum at Key Stages 2, 3 and 4 for primary and secondary schools.

In April, I won a curriculum development grant from The Centre for the Study of Comprehensive Schools, to develop a project in which schools in Surrey collect weather statistics using Weather Reporter and exchange this data using Email or Fax. We are hoping to be able to study micro-climates and monitor the progression of weather systems. It would be nice if schools in other parts of the country could become involved in this project. Who knows - with a large enough network of Reporters, we could put the Met. office out of business!

If you are interested in knowing more about the Weather Reporter or the project, do phone me (0932 232402) for details. The Reporter itself may be ordered from The Advisory Unit for Microtechnology in Education,

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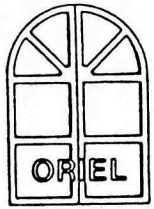
LET YOUR MOUSE DO THE SEARCHING - Information Handling in a Windows Environment

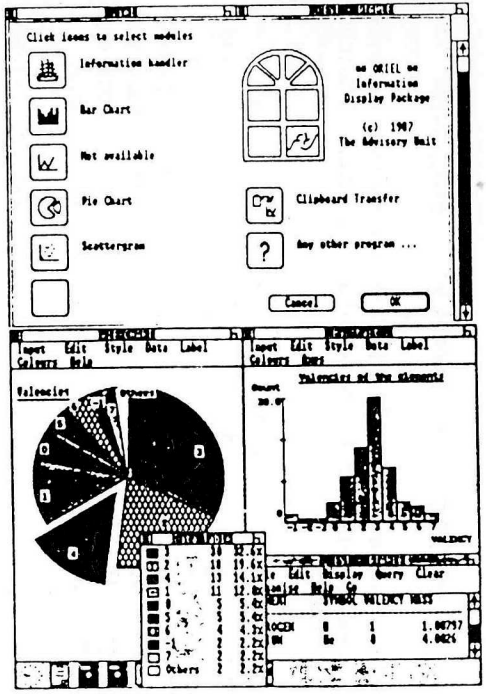


What is Oriel?

Oriel consists of an advanced Information Handling (database) system together with a set of graphic display utilities

Is Oriel easy to use?

Oriel is both sophisticated and accessible. Using an English-like interrogation language you will find, in particular, the process of questioning data very simple.



At the touch of a few buttons you can browse freely through the data, ask both simple and complex questions, move data from one part of Oriel to another and simultaneously undertake a number of different tasks.

What other facilities does Oriel offer?

Oriel enables you to display data in, for example, pie-charts, bar-charts, line graphs and scattergrams.

Oriel can also be used to handle information created from another software package. You may wish, for example, to display data from a spreadsheet in Oriel's pie-chart.

Can I use QUEST data with Oriel?

Oriel is designed to run under Microsoft Windows. The package will run on any micro capable of operating MS Windows that has a memory of 640K.

To order **Oriel** or for further information, contact:

The Advisory Unit for Microtechnology in Education, Endymion Road, Hatfield, Herts AL10 8AU. Tel: (0702) 654443

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Extracting information using Excel

Ian Dodgson

In the last issue Stephen Rochhford asked for some help in extracting information from the membership database using Excel. The following is an attempt to help.

Computers	PC186	Net AX	PC286	HU	north
12J1K3O	12	1	3	LZ	scotland
13J1K9O	13	1	9	CA	wales
11J1K5O	11	1	5	CO	midlands
23J1K5O	23	1	5	BD	south west
15J2K9O	15	2	9	HE	south east
45J3K1O	45	3	1	DN	north

The above represents a section of the database. The column headed computers contains the coded fields for computers. The columns headed PC186 etc contain formulae like this:

```
=VALUE(MID($G2,FIND("J",$G2,1)-2,2))
```

assuming that the computers column is G and the code used for Nimbus PC186 is J then this finds the letter J in the string. It subtracts 2 from this position and then takes the 2 characters from this position (which gives the number in front of the J). The final result is the value of this string. The $G is used so that when the formula is copied right it will still refer to a cell in column G; this is known as absolute referencing. A similar technique is used to find the number in front of all the other codes.

Associating an area with the postcode is reasonably simple. The two columns on the right of the sample sheet contain the first two letters of each post code area and then a corresponding area name. The first column is named as Code and the second as area. Finally a formula like:

```
=INDEX(region,MATCH(LEFT(E2,2),code,0),1)
```

is used to work out the area corresponding to the post code. It takes the first two letters from the members postcode, and then uses match to find this in the 0th column of the area called code. It returns the row in which it is found and then this is used by index to give the corresponding region name.

It's easy when you know how! My thanks to Ian for his help. The graph on the next page is just a dummy because I haven't had time to load the datafile into Excel and add all the formulae but I hope to do it before the next issue. My next question concerns re-sizing the graphs. The chart on the next page was simply selected in Excel, copied and then pasted into PageMaker. This works, but if I change the size then the legend doesn't just get smaller but moves towards and eventually overlaps the pie. Help!

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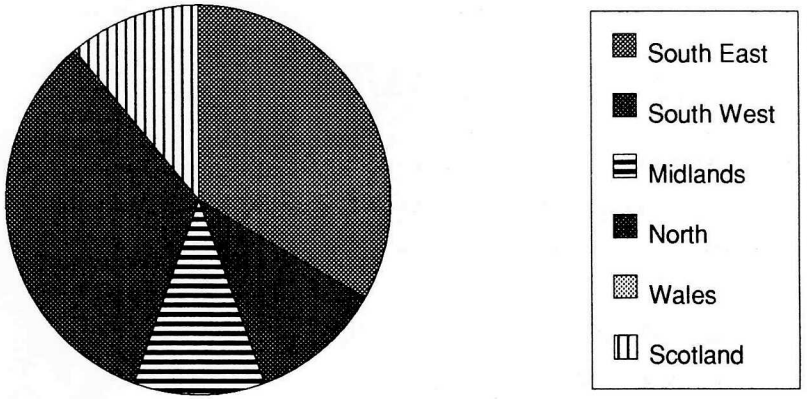

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Network News from the Conference.

John Williams

Taking a third of one's Network Stations and cables to the RM User Group Conference and inviting the boys from RM to attach their servers to the end is a bit like putting your head on the guillotine block to check if the blade is straight. Fortunately everything worked apart from one T piece with a broken internal connection, (it had to be the one on the back of the server didn't it) and a station that had managed to leave its RAM card back on the bench and so couldn't boot from NET 3.

In the process I was able to listen in on the words of wisdom from the professionals, and can now pass on a few of their gems.

(i) The Environment Space problem. Keep users pathnames as short as you can. RM are looking for a solution.

(ii) Slow booting PC286s. It's a bug in the firmware which has been around for a long time but has just come to light. A fix via the network software is being sought to let you fix it yourself by copying in some new files, rather than sending the stations back to RM for new chips.

(iii) Windows Speed. You can make dramatic changes to the speed of Windows applications by rearranging the order of the sub-directories in the PATH command in the WIN.BAT file. All windows applications frequently use code from files in the Windows directory, (that's why they all look alike), so P:\WINDOWS needs to be at the beginning of the line, not last but one as it is in the latest version. Who boobed?

(iv) Cabling. This one keeps coming back. The best advice is: If you can make GOOD cables keep them as short as possible. If you're in any doubt about your ability to make them, buy them ready made.

(v) Server Configuration. Adjust the number of stations supported by the server to 20 (or other appropriate value) if you have fewer than the default 48. In NET 2 do this by adjusting the /N: switch to /N:20, in NET 3 set the number of stations to 20. If your server has more than one hard disc then put the users' files on one of them and the public applications on the other. If all your stations have floppy drives then add the line

```
set dd=a:
```

to P:\AUTOEXEC.BAT and Q:\AUTOEXEC.BAT to make this the default drive. Users will now save their work to the local floppies, reducing network traffic.

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(vi) **Speeding up the hard disc.** If you have sufficient memory then set up a disc cache. With a PC186 server you need 1.5Mb and WINCACHE.COM (available from Tech Support). If you have more than 2Mb on an X Series server then use SMARTDRV.SYS. If your hard disc is nearly full then it is also likely to be fragmented. This means that instead of files being saved so that all their data is in one area of the disc, they have clusters scattered over the disc. To cure this, backup the server, **CHECK** the backup, reformat the hard disc (use FORMAT /S to put back the system data) and finally restore all the files. Don't do this unless you have a day to spare; it's not quick (even with a tape streamer you should allow twice as long as you think you need, just in case!)

(vii) Making memory available. If your X Series server has only 2Mb then you may not be able to run SMARTDRV because the expanded memory is used to build the remote boot disc images. If you only boot one type of station (i.e. only PC186 or M/X series) then you can disable booting for the other kind. To do this on NET 2 you need XOFF/PCOFF from Tech Support; on Net 3 select the station type that the server can boot in Netman. You can also delete unwanted drivers from \NETWORK\NETX or \NETWORK\NETPC. For example, if you only have Z Net stations then you don't need the ethernet drivers. When you've deleted everything you don't need (but take a copy first in case you delete the wrong files accidentally) add the line

```
DEVICE=C:\XPUBLIC\SMARTDRV.SYS /A 512
```

to CONFIG.SYS in the server boot disc and try to start the server. If it fails (with an error message telling you that there is insufficient Expanded Memory then you cannot run SMARTDRV; delete the SMARTDRV line and all will be back to normal.

Things to watch out for.

If you were around late enough at night, an embryonic version of a very compact user menu was displayed. It's a long way from being allowed to escape even as unsupported software but if we keep the pressure on RM to free up as much memory as possible, it may well appear in some form as a solution.

Everyone from RM was very keen to hear our problems, and RM User seems to be compulsory reading in Tech Support, so keep on writing about them.

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Vine Micros PC-TV VGA Adapter

Keith Whiddon

I manage a computer unit that runs courses for students, teachers and admin. staff from across the County, using networked PC 286 machines. I urgently needed some form of large computer display to demonstrate software. After some research, I had to dismiss large screen multi-sync monitors and LED OHP display panels suitable for the VGA output of the PC 286, because my budget wouldn't stretch to nearly £2,000! Instead, I chanced upon an advert by Vine Micros for an adapter to connect a VGA computer to an ordinary TV, at a cost of around £100. I use a 28" Philips TV on a large stand, so this certainly was a low cost approach.

The adapter comes in 3 versions:

1. PC-UHF - which plugs into the aerial socket of a TV, giving a reasonable quality display. This version also includes a composite video output for use with a video recorder. It is possible to pre-record demonstrations onto video, enabling one to talk through the presentation without having to battle with the keyboard. Cost £119-95.

2. PC-SCART - which plugs into the SCART (Euroconnector) socket, now standard on modern TVs. This provides a high quality display, clearly visible from some distance, however, it does not include composite video output. Cost £89-95.

3. PC-UHF/SCART - I went for this combined version of the above, to give greatest flexibility. Cost £134-95.

All the versions support up to 640*480 line modes, the full 262,144 colour palette, both interlaced and non-interlaced modes and all common VGA modes.

The adapter is driven by memory resident software (total size < 8k) that enables the use of ALT keycodes to change the display parameters - Eg. ALT + V toggles display between the computer monitor and TV screen. The well written manual describes a great many settings which may be changed and whilest this could be a bit off-putting to the non-technical user, it does provide enough flexiblity to match the adapter to the computer and TV to get the best from it.

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There are, of course, some limitations.

1. RM mode is not supported, so no "Nimbus" software can be run (although I understand that RML have expressed an interest in the adapter - hopefully they will be talking to Vine with a view to developing the necessary software drivers).

2. Interlacing is a method of displaying computer information in half the amount of lines usually required (ie 480 line modes are displayed in only 240 lines, etc.) Certain graphics modes cause unpleasant flickering on the TV screen when in interlaced mode. This can easily be cured by toggling the interlacing off (ALT + O). However, non-interlaced modes will only allow a maximum of 280 lines (or about 80% of the computer screen) to be seen at one time on a TV screen. It is therefore necessary to scroll the screen up or down with the ALT + Q/A/Z keys to alter the viewing window. Actually, I turn this to my advantage. If, for example, I am running a demo on Excel, it is an easy matter to make Excel run in a window that fills the whole TV screen. As this is only 80% of the computer display, the text shown on the TV is enormous - exactly what is wanted in a demonstration to a large group.

I have made extensive use of the adapter with many Windows applications, (including Windows 3) as well as with MS Word 5, MS Quick Basic, etc. In short, I find it an excellent and cheap way of providing a large screen display for the PC 286.

Vine Micros may be contacted at 47-48, Hawley Square, Margate, Kent, CT9 1NY. Tel 0843 225714.

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Newman Software

If you are familiar with programs from Newman Software, ensure that you know what the latest products are available for the Nimbus.

Database
Grass (£28)

Utilities
Grass Bank (£20)

Spreadsheet
Grasshopper (£30)

Wordprocessing
Caxton (£30)
Whow (£20)

DTP
Front Page Extra
Caxton Press

Local Viewdata
Newsbulletin

Also from MAPE
Owl Pack (£12.50)
Stylus (£12.50)

All these programs (except Stylus and Whow) work across a network. The prices above are for single copies (which includes a site licence). LEA licences are available and are a much cheaper way of acquiring the software.

Send in your order today or write for further details to Newman Software, Computer Centre, Newman College, Bartley Green, Birmingham B32 3NT. Telephone: 021 476 1181)

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Micro Mart

Nimbus PC20 with 20Mb hard disc, colour monitor, keyboard, mouse and parallel printer port. Software: Windows, RM and BBC BASIC, NewSPAper and various others. 1 year warranty remaining. Buyer collects or ships £900. Parallel I/O board upgrade £25
Gerry Lucas
051 632 1994

Chain 16 Server with Winchester disc and 8" disc drive, 1_mono monitor, 2 RGB analogue monitors (for 380z), 4 large screen Decca TVs plus assorted extras.

Miss Reynolds
St Michael's School
John Felton Road
London
SE16 4UN

380z with NEC monitor, CP/M, BASIC, TXED, Eureka, ZASM v3 and all manuals.
Any reasonable offer accepted or will swap for Archimedes software or even some $3^1/_2$" discs.

Don Langdon
36 Bramley Park
Bodmin
Cornwall
PL31 2BN
0208 72131 **early evening (before 8pm)**

Wanted

CP/M and other software and manuals for single density 380z
Clive Astley
14 Thourlstone Avenue
Solihull
West Midlands
B92 7NY
0203 304367 ext 397 (day) 021 722 2794 (evenings)

Nimbus PC1 with green or colour monitor, preferably with printer

Mr Gunn, Halstow Primary School
081 858 2767

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In order to serve our members better we like to know something about them and what they use their computers to do. The information is confidential and we are registered as Data Users under the Data Protection Act.

Please fill in a number next to the computer names below; the first box is for standalone computers, the second, if present, is for networked machines.

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Nimbus PC386	☐☐			Nimbus AX	☐☐	Nimbus VX	☐☐
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Please send your form to: **Stephen Rochford, RMUG Membership Secretary, George Stephenson Community High School, Southgate, Killingworth, NE12 0SA**

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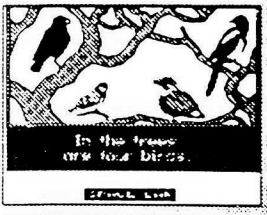

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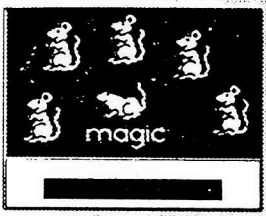

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